

Iran's Acting Foreign Minister Ali Bagheri Kani Is Scheduled to Participate at the Upcoming D-8 Group Session in Turkish City of Istanbul Which Is Set to Discuss the Gaza war

IRAN NEWS

Iran's Foreign Ministry Spokesman Nasser Kanaani Has Said That the Ministry Is Pursuing the Case of an Iranian Pro-Palestine Activist Detained by French Police to Ensure His Immediate Release

2 DOMESTIC



Afghanistan Not Committed to Annual Transfer of 800m Cubic Meters of Iran Water Rights

> SEE PAGE 2

3 INTERNATIONAL

Dutch Far-Right Party Makes Big Gains at EU Election

> SEE PAGE 3



IAEA Resolution Not to Undermine Iran's Nuclear Development Plans



TEHRAN (PressTV) - The Foreign Ministry has strongly condemned the United Nations nuclear agency's earlier passage of an anti-Iranian resolution, insisting that such moves would not serve to undermine the country's nuclear development plans. The ministry issued the remarks in a statement on Wednesday after the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)'s Board of Governors passed the resolution, accusing the Islamic Republic of withholding sufficient cooperation with the agency. "Passage of the resolution will have no effect on the Islamic Republic's resolve to continue its peaceful application of the nuclear energy and operationalize its developmental nuclear plans in line with the rights that are accorded to the country under the relevant international agreements," the ministry's statement read. It considered the resolution to be a "politically-motivated and non-constructive measure" and an attempt on the part of some Western countries to take political advantage of international mechanisms to target independent countries. Iran asserts that it runs one of the most transparent peaceful nuclear energy programs among the IAEA's members. The country has also repeatedly voiced its readiness to resolve differences with the IAEA within a framework of constructive and mutual interaction and technical cooperation. The ministry's statement likewise declared that "Iran is committed to continue technical cooperation with the agency within the framework of its international rights and obligations based on the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and [the agency's] Safeguards Agreement."



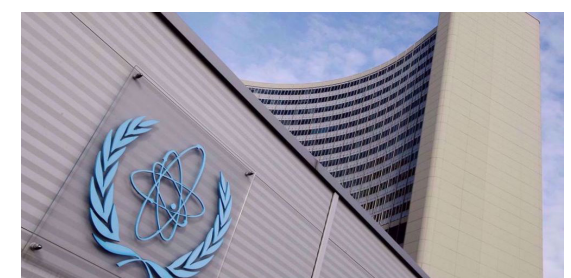
Iran Strongly Rejects IAEA Allegations in New Resolution

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's permanent ambassador to the United Nations has firmly rejected allegations by the IAEA against the Islamic Republic's peaceful nuclear program. In a letter to UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and the rotating president of the UN Security Council Joonkook Hwang on Thursday, Amir Saeed Iravani said Tehran's decision to take remedial measures is in full compliance with its inherent right under Iran's 2015 nuclear deal known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). The resolution was issued by the International Atomic Energy Agency's Board of Governors on Wednesday. The Iranian diplomat also lambasted Britain, France and Germany - known as the E3 - for spearheading the anti-Iran resolution at the UN's nuclear agency. Tehran, he said, "rejects all the allegations" in the E3's letter and "reiterates its position concerning its peaceful nuclear program and the JCPOA." Iravani said the E3 continues to level unfounded allegations against Iran for non-compliance with JCPOA commitments. "Iran's decision to take remedial measures was in full accordance with its inherent right under paragraphs 26 and 36 of the JCPOA, in reaction to the United States' unlawful unilateral withdrawal from the agreement on 8 May 2018, and the subsequent failure of the E3 to uphold their commitments. The objective behind Iran's decision, which was made a full year after the US's unlawful withdrawal and the E3/EU's failure to fulfill their sanctions-lifting obligations, was crystal clear: to restore a balance in reciprocal commitments and benefits under the JCPOA," Iravani's ambassador to the UN said. "The claim that the E3 has consistently upheld its JCPOA commitments is simply untrue. On the contrary, the E3 has constantly failed to honor its obligations under paragraph 20 of Annex V of the JCPOA. This significant non-compliance is still ongoing. The E3's failure to implement its sanctions-lifting commitments specified in paragraph 20 of Annex V of the JCPOA on Transition Day (18 October 2023) as an unjustifiable unilateral is a clear example of substantial non-performance of their obligations, thereby violating both the JCPOA and UNSC Resolution 2231 (2015)," Iravani stated. He said Tehran has persistently complied with its obligations under the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements (CSA),



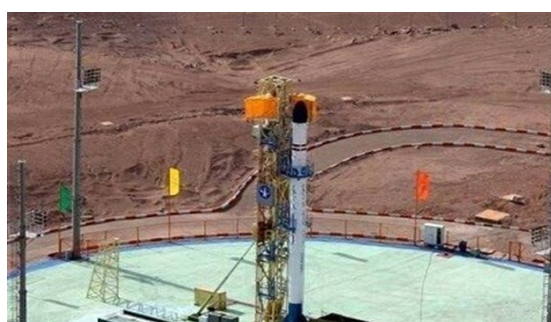
including through maximum cooperation with the UN nuclear agency to implement its verification activities in Iran, emphasizing that Iran has so far been under the most "robust verification and monitoring activities" of the IAEA. "Iran's decision to enrich uranium in Fordow was a remedial measure in response to non-compliance of the United States and E3/EU with their legally binding obligations under Resolution 2231 (2025) and their significant non-performance under the JCPOA commitments. That decision was also made in exercising Iran's rights expressly stated in paragraphs 26 and 36 of the JCPOA and in full accordance with its inherent rights under the NPT and the commitment under CSA. However, all such activities have been and continue to be under the supervision of the IAEA," Iravani further wrote in the letter. Iran's UN envoy also stated that Iran's commitment to its obligations under the NPT remains steadfast. "States parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) shall not be prevented from exercising their inalienable rights under the Treaty to develop research, production, and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination and in full conformity with articles I and II of the Treaty. Any allegation to the contrary is baseless and categorically rejected. The claim that Iran's nuclear program has reached a critical and irreversible point, coupled with assertions that Iran's peaceful nuclear activities pose a threat to international peace and security, are entirely false and unfounded," he said. In conclusion, Iravani said Iran "reaffirms its unwavering commitment to diplomacy. It has repeatedly shown its willingness to resume talks with the aim of full implementation of the JCPOA by all participants. The JCPOA is a hard-won multilateral diplomatic achievement that remains the best option with no alternatives. It exemplified successful dialogue and diplomacy, effectively averting an undue crisis. Its revival is indeed in the interest of all participants." Iran asserts that it runs one of the most transparent peaceful nuclear energy programs among the IAEA's members. The Islamic Republic has also repeatedly voiced its readiness to resolve differences with the IAEA within a framework of constructive and mutual interaction and technical cooperation.

Envoy Warns Negative Consequences of IAEA Resolution Lie With E3



TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's permanent representative to the United Nations office in Vienna has censured Britain, France and Germany for spearheading a resolution against Tehran at the IAEA, warning that the three European countries will bear responsibility for the negative consequences of the move. Mohsen Naziri Asl made the statement at a session of the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on Wednesday after the 35-member body passed a resolution accusing Iran of withholding sufficient cooperation with the agency. Ratified by 20 votes in favor, two against with 12 abstentions, the resolution proposed by the European troika - also known as the E3 - demands that the Islamic Republic step up its cooperation with the IAEA and provide "technically credible explanations which satisfy the Agency's questions." The resolution also supports the IAEA to pursue its dialogue with Iran to clarify all outstanding safeguards issues. "Beyond a shadow of a doubt, this resolution will severely impact the positive atmosphere needed to work on further measures that must be mutually agreed upon by Iran and the agency," Naziri Asl said. "Now, the troika must take responsibility for any consequences because Iran may act accordingly and in full compliance with its rights and obligations," he added. Stressing that Iran has shown its interest in words and actions for constructive interaction with the IAEA, the senior diplomat said, "The Islamic Republic is now ready to react to any non-constructive stance and action." Naziri Asl also underlined that the anti-Iran resolution cannot divert the international community's attention from the real intention of the troika, which is to give the Israeli regime enough time to continue its genocide in Gaza with impunity, and cannot pressure the Islamic Republic to abandon its right to pursue a peaceful nuclear program. Also on Wednesday, Behrouz Kamalvandi, the spokesman for the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI), strongly condemned the resolution and said the Islamic Republic will not back down from its inalienable right in the face of political pressures.

Middle East's Biggest Space Center Under Construction in Iran



TEHRAN (Tasnim) - Iran is constructing the largest space center of the Middle East in its southeastern port city of Chabahar, Minister of Communications and Information Technology (ICT) Issa Zarepoor said. During a visit to Sistan and Baluchestan Province on Thursday, the ICT minister said the Chabahar Space Center, currently under construction, will become the largest space center in the Middle East. The first phase of the center, 56% of which has been completed, will come into operation in early February 2025, he said. Zarepoor also unveiled plans for the first launch from the new base in the current Persian year, which will end on March 20, 2025. The space facility, planned to cater to Iranian satellite launches, will also promote the country's cooperation with international partners and increase its revenue. Iran's pursuit of space exploration and its associated advantages has prompted the nation to take significant strides in satellite technology. The Imam Khomeini National Space Center, Iran's inaugural fixed launch site, has played a pivotal role in the country's space endeavors since its inauguration in 2017. This facility encompasses all stages of space missions, from satellite preparation to launch, control, and guidance. Situated in the northern province of Semnan, the Imam Khomeini National Space Center effectively fulfills Iran's requirements in Low Earth Orbit (LEO) during its final phase. The Chabahar Space Center is explicitly designated as a non-military launch center, intended for live payload launches, as well as the deployment of Earth observation and communication satellites into geosynchronous orbit. These operations necessitate specific conditions, ideally close to the equatorial region, to minimize launch costs and orbital adjustments.

U.S. Aircraft Carrier Still in Houthi Forces Crosshairs

SANAA (Dispatches) - The leader of Yemen's popular resistance Ansarullah movement vows that the country's Armed Forces will keep targeting USS Dwight D. Eisenhower, the aircraft carrier that has so far been struck twice during the forces' anti-American operations. "The American aircraft carrier 'Eisenhower' will remain a target for our Armed Forces whenever the opportunity arises," Abdul-Malik al-Houthi said in a speech on Thursday. "The upcoming strikes will be more impactful and effective," he pledged. The carrier was hit by the forces in the Red Sea on Friday and then on Saturday in response to the United States' acts of aggression against Yemen. American and British forces have been staging various offensives against the Arab Peninsula nation as means of trying to stop its pro-Palestinian operations. Most recently, American and British warplanes and US warships targeted the western Yemeni provinces of Sana'a, al-Hudaydah, and Ta'izz, killing at least 16 people and wounding more than 40 others. Al-Houthi went on to detail the forces' operations against the carrier, which he praised as "one of the most notable and

important operations to be carried out this week." He noted that the vessel had been hit twice within 24 hours, using seven cruise missiles and four drones. After the strikes, "it (the carrier) retreated towards the northern Red Sea, fearing further targeting by our Armed Forces," the Ansarullah leader said. "The 'Eisenhower' was 400 kilometers from the Yemeni coast during the targeting, then moved about 880 kilometers northwest of [the Saudi port city of] Jeddah," he remarked. "The operation to target the 'Eisenhower' was successful, and its air traffic halted for two days after the targeting." Washington, however, tried to deny that the vessel had been targeted, al-Houthi added, putting the denial down to "their (the Americans') embarrassment and sense of defeat and loss of prestige." However, "the facts will be revealed no matter how much the Americans try to deny the targeting operations," he stated. Elsewhere in his remarks, the Yemeni official said the Israeli regime had failed to realize its goals in the Gaza Strip, which Tel Aviv has brought under a genocidal war since last October.



Intelligence Ministry Monitoring Iran Election Processes



TEHRAN (Tasnim) - The intelligence minister of Iran said the ministry is carefully and constantly monitoring the course of the upcoming presidential election and will assess the behavior of the final candidates and foil the hostile attempts at disturbing social calm. A meeting of the heads of Iran's branches of power was held on Wednesday evening to coordinate plans for the upcoming presidential election, slated for June 28. The meeting was attended by the acting president, the Parliament speaker, the Judiciary chief, the vice president for legal affairs, the minister of intelligence, the minister of information and communications technology, and the president of Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting. Iranian Intelligence Minister Esmail Khatib gave a report on the presidential contest, saying his ministry will constantly and impartially monitor the behavior of the candidates and their proponents, give the necessary warnings to people against destructive or defamatory conducts, and report the wrongdoings to the judicial authorities, if necessary. He also noted that the Intelligence Ministry is trying to foil hostile attempts by foreign-based elements at disrupting the Iranian community's psychological calm, so that people would be able to vote in a healthy atmosphere without the enemy's interference. A helicopter carrying Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and his entourage crashed in northwest mountainous forests on May 19, killing the president, Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, and six others. According to the Constitution, First Vice President Mohammad Mokhber has taken the helm as the acting president at the discretion of Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei. The Elections Headquarters of Iran has set a timetable for the formation of electoral executive delegations, the registration of applicants, and the election campaign processes. The election campaign period is set for June 12-26, while the nationwide presidential election will be held on Friday, June 28.

IRAN NEWS



\$450m Worth of Handicrafts Exported Excluding Jewelry and Luggage Exports

TEHRAN - The Deputy of Handicrafts of the country announced that last year's handicrafts exports, excluding jewelry and luggage exports, amounted to \$450 million. She stated that exports are one of the essential components of the handicrafts market, and with the support of the martyred president and the determination of the Minister of Cultural Heritage to remove obstacles, we witnessed significant growth last year. Despite years of experience in production and diversity of handicrafts, Iranian handicrafts have not held a significant position in the global market for years. Iranian handicrafts do not have a serious impact on the country's economy, and Iranian artists and producers are not properly acquainted with global markets. Consequently, the export of this art-industry has not had a major impact on society. However, the Deputy of Handicrafts believes that the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts, and Tourism has undertaken substantial foundational and structural activities in recent years, leading to significant export growth since last year.

Iran, Egypt Stress Continuation of Talks on Bilateral Issues



TEHRAN (IP) - In a telephone conversation with Egypt's Foreign Minister, the Iranian Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs emphasized the necessity of continuing the talks between the two sides. Ali Bagheri Kani in a telephone conversation with Egypt's Foreign Minister Sameh Shukri, emphasized the necessity of continuing the talks between Iran and Egypt. Bagheri Kani also highlighted the efforts of martyred top Iranian diplomat Hossein Amirabdollahian to advance the process of resuming bilateral relations based on the principle of mutual respect and the interests of Tehran and Cairo. In the telephone call, he appreciated the messages of condolence sent by senior Egyptian officials following the martyrdom of President Raisi and Foreign Minister Amir-Abdollahian to the Iranian government and people. The Egyptian top diplomat once again expressed his condolences to the Iranian nation for losing the martyred president, foreign minister and several others in helicopter crash incident. The two sides also exchanged views on the continued crimes of the Zionist regime in Gaza. Bagheri Kani called for collective action by Islamic countries using all available capacities to stop the genocide of Palestinians and accelerate humanitarian aid supplies into Gaza whereas, Shoukry reminded the Egyptian government's efforts in the past months to stop the war. The Egyptian foreign minister described the talks between the officials of the two countries as constructive for resuming relations and expanding cooperation in various fields.

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

Afghanistan Not Committed to Annual Transfer of 800m Cubic Meters of Iran Water Rights

TEHRAN - Energy Minister Akbar Mehrabian in the online inauguration ceremony of the comprehensive water supply plan for Zahedan and Sistan, the Mil Nader power plant, the Shahr-e-Kur dam, and 25 other projects of the Ministry of Energy said: In a trip we made in September 2021 with the late President Ayatollah Raisi to Sistan and Baluchestan province, the people in all areas of this province, especially Sistan region and the cities of Zabol, Himand, and Zahedan, raised numerous complaints about the lack of sustainable and hygienic water supply, and investigations showed that the situation of the province for providing water in the drinking, agricultural, and environmental sectors was not satisfactory. During that trip, the esteemed President Ayatollah Raisi promised in a large gathering of the dear people of Sistan and Baluchestan province that all the country's and government's capacities would be used to solve the water problem of the people of this province, which includes 11 percent of the country's area. Mehrabian stated that at the beginning of the government, the rate of access to water for the people of Sistan and Baluchestan province was very low. Based on this, the 13th government and the Ministry of Energy made comprehensive plans from the beginning in different parts of the province, including the north, center, and south, to solve the water problem and hundreds of projects for water transfer, well drilling, and sustainable water supply for the people of the province were put on the agenda. He stated: The completion of the Mashkid Sefli dam and the Shahr-e-Kur



dam and the implementation of large water supply jihad projects were other measures that the Ministry of Energy took to solve the water problem of the people of Sistan and Baluchestan province. He added: Despite the fact that the water supply jihad project is being implemented in 31 provinces of the country, due to the high importance of water supply in Sistan and Baluchestan province and the many problems in the rural water supply of this province, 25 percent of the total capacity of the country's water supply jihad was allocated to Sistan and Baluchestan province. He noted that in the past 3 years, Afghanistan has not committed to the annual payment of 800 million cubic meters of Iran's water rights from the Helmand River. Due to the severe water problems caused by continuous droughts and the lack of commitment from the neighboring country to pay Iran's legal water rights from the Helmand River, numerous engineering projects without reliance on another country were implemented in three layers to ensure sustainable water supply. Mehrabian emphasized that securing water rights from the Helmand River is Iran's legitimate and legal right. In recent months, due to the release of part of Iran's water rights, the Chahmeh reservoirs have been filled with 300 million cubic meters of water. Besides the issue of Iran's water rights from the Helmand River, water supply projects in the north and center of the province were pursued in three layers. The first layer, executed in less than 8 months, included drilling 150 wells in this area.

53m Cubic Meters Added to Crude Gas Production

ZAHEDAN (IP) - At the opening ceremony of the gas supply projects to the cities of Sistan and Baluchistan, the Iranian Oil Minister, pointing out that 50 large projects worth 47.5 billion dollars that have been started in the country in these three years, stated in the last three years, 53 million cubic meters were added to the country's crude gas production. Pointing out that 50 large projects worth 47.5 billion dollars have been inaugurated in the country in the last three years, the oil minister, Javad Owji said: "Martyred President Ebrahim Raisi emphasized that a revolution should take place in the field of gas supply in Sistan and Baluchistan." The oil minister pointing out that in the last three years, 155 half-finished and new projects worth 34 billion dollars have been put into operation, he said: "At this time, the implementation of 50 new projects worth 47.5 billion dollars has also been launched." Owji continued: "In the current administration's tenure, in the country's oil and gas industry, more than 155 half-finished and new projects worth 34 billion dollars have been put into operation. These projects were mainly projects in the upstream sector, including the development of oil fields, gas, collecting flare gases as well as in the downstream

sector in the field of oil and gas industry, which is defined as the field of oil refinery, gas refinery, oil product transmission lines and gas transmission lines." Pointing out that 50 mega projects worth 47.5 billion dollars have been launched in the country in these three years, the oil minister stated: "Out of the total of 155 announced projects that have been put into operation in these three years, many of the projects were unfinished for 12 or 15 years, which with a value of 34 billion dollars, the success of 60% growth in the field of oil production materialized which led to production of 3,670,000 barrels of oil today." Owji stated: "In the last three years, 53 million cubic meters were added to the country's crude gas production; Also, nearly 55 million cubic meters have been added to the country's gas refining capacity, including the opening of South Pars Phase 14 refinery, which is considered one of the largest gas refineries in the country."

Iran's oil Minister added: "The enemy has admitted that Iran's oil exports have increased compared to 2018, while the United States imposed more than 600 sanctions against Iran's oil industry in these years, but it could not stop our country's exports even for a single day."



Tehran to Host Conference on 550 Years of Diplomatic Relations Between Iran and Poland

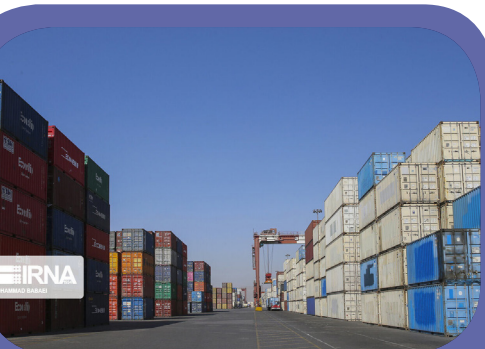


TEHRAN - Faculty of Law and Political Sciences of University of Tehran on Sunday, June 9, will host the International Commemoration Conference on 550 Years of Diplomatic Relations Between Iran and Poland which will kick off at 10 a.m. According to reports, the conference will be held in collaboration between Embassy of Poland, Negarestan Andisheh Institute, Iranian Studies Center of University of Tehran, National Library and Archives of Iran, Faculty of Law and Political Science of University of Tehran and Iranian Society of History. In the event the background and the history of Iranian and Polish Diplomatic Relationship will be reviewed and by the way the historical and cultural relations of Poland and Persia will be of the other topics which is on the agenda of the conference. According to reports, in 1474, Venetian merchant Ambrogio Contarini, delivered a letter to the Polish King Casimir IV Jagiellon from Shah Uzun Hasan and it was the beginning of the relation between the two countries.

Vietnam Market: Gateway to the Southeast Asian Market



TEHRAN (Dispatches) - The President of the Zanjan Chamber of Commerce stated that entering the Vietnamese market paves the way for access to the Southeast Asian market. He suggested creating a joint market for the distribution of Vietnamese and Hidaj Zanjan shoes as an appropriate strategy to strengthen cooperation with this country. The President of the Zanjan Chamber of Commerce stated that entering the Vietnamese market paves the way for access to the Southeast Asian market. He suggested creating a joint market for the distribution of Vietnamese and Hidaj Zanjan shoes as an appropriate strategy to strengthen cooperation with this country. The President of the Zanjan Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture, referring to Vietnam's successful experiences, especially in economic liberalization and monetary and financial policy reforms, stated that operating in this Southeast Asian market will also open the doors to high-yield markets in Singapore, Taiwan, and Indonesia. During his visit to Vietnam, Samad Yousufi Asl met with Ali Akbar Nazari, Iran's ambassador to Hanoi. They discussed Zanjan province's economic capacities and investment opportunities, exploring the economic indicators of both parties, the feasibility of establishing joint cooperation, and practical solutions based on strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. He also emphasized the importance of cultures and lifestyles in shaping economic approaches and production in various regions, stating that the shoe industry can create a deep bond between Vietnam and the city of Hidaj in Zanjan. This partnership could set patterns for joint cooperation to market this product globally, as Hidaj is one of Iran's largest shoe producers, exporting to countries like Egypt, Tunisia, Azerbaijan, Iraq, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan. Yousufi Asl continued: "Drawing a line of cooperation and modern production between Vietnam and Hidaj will not only align us with global market demands but also provide a unique opportunity to understand the culture, market characteristics, traders' temperaments, and trade practices of Southeast Asian countries."



CPTA Providing Iran, Other Member States With New Capacities for Trade

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Head of Iran Center for e-Commerce Development Amin Kolahdouzan has said that the Islamic Republic and other member states of the Cross-border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific (CPTA) enjoy the proper capacities to expand trade ties.

Addressing the third Session of the Paperless Trade Council of the Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific (CPTA), which is held in Bangkok, Thailand, on June 6-7, the Iranian official noted that Tehran is ready to expand cooperation with other member states of the CPTA.

He argued that the usage of modern technologies along with international collaborations can pave the way for a brilliant future in terms of electronic trade, adding that electronic signatures saw a 100% growth in Iran last year.

The third Session of the Paperless Trade Council of the Framework Agreement on Facilitation of CPTA is scheduled to review the progress of implementing the Framework Agreement and make strategic decisions on further implementation.

The Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific (CPTA) was approved by the Iranian Parliament in 2019. Several countries, including Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, China, Iran, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, the Philippines, South Korea, Russia, Tajikistan, Timor-Leste, and Turkmenistan, are members of this agreement.

Samsung Workers in South Korea Stage First-Ever Strike Over Pay

SEOUL (Dispatches) - Workers at tech giant Samsung Electronics in South Korea staged the first strike at the company on Friday, the head of a major union representing tens of thousands of people told AFP. Samsung Electronics is one of the world's largest smartphone makers and also one of the only companies globally to produce high-end memory chips used for generative AI, including top-of-the-line AI hardware from industry leaders such as Nvidia. Management at the firm, the world's biggest producer of memory chips, has been locked in negotiations with the union over wages since January but the two sides have failed to narrow their differences. "The first strike at Samsung Electronics is taking place today through the use of paid leave, and it is understood that many employees are participating," Son Woo-mok, head of the National Samsung Electronics Union said. "It's difficult to provide an exact number, but from what I've seen of the workplace attendance in the morning, there is a significant difference from the usual," he added. Samsung Electronics said it has been "diligently engaging in negotiations with the union and will continue to do so".



IRAN NEWS

Kremlin Warns West Over Providing Long-Range Weapons to Ukraine



MOSCOW (Dispatches) - The Kremlin said on Thursday that Western nations supplying Ukraine with weapons to strike Russian territory will have to reckon with Russia, after President Vladimir Putin said he was considering arming the West's enemies in retaliation. Speaking with senior editors of international news agencies in St Petersburg on Wednesday, the Russian leader said Moscow was thinking about providing advanced long-range weapons - of a similar nature to those the West is giving Ukraine - to the West's adversaries around the world. Putin in his comments mentioned long-range missiles being supplied to Ukraine by the U.S. and Britain. "We are thinking that if someone thinks it is possible to supply such weapons to a war zone in order to strike at our territory and create problems for us, then why do we not have the right to supply our weapons of the same class to those regions of the world where there will be strikes on sensitive facilities of those countries that are doing this to Russia?" said Putin. "So the response could be symmetrical. We will think about this." Putin's comments suggested that he could supply weapons to U.S. antagonists such as Iran-backed militias in Iraq and Syria that have periodically launched rockets and drones at U.S. troops. It was not clear, however, to whom Putin would provide weapons in Britain's case. Asked about Putin's comments, U.S. President Joe Biden told ABC News on Thursday during D-Day commemorations in France that Ukraine was limited in firing U.S.-supplied weapons at targets inside Russia near the countries' border. "We're not talking about giving them weapons to strike Moscow, to strike the Kremlin," he said. "Just across the border where they're receiving significant fire from conventional weapons used by the Russians to go into Ukraine to kill Ukrainians." Biden was referring to Russian troops and artillery deployed just inside Russia supporting a Russian offensive against the northeastern Ukrainian city of Kharkiv, which also has been hit with glide bombs launched by Russian jets from its airspace.



Dutch Far-Right Party Makes Big Gains at EU Election

BRUSSELS (Dispatches) - A final exit poll suggested Thursday that Geert Wilders' far-right party made big gains and was in a neck and neck race with a center-left alliance in Dutch elections for the European Union parliament. In a possible harbinger of strong electoral gains for the hard right in the Europe Union, the exit poll indicated that Wilders' Party for Freedom had made the biggest gains — winning seven seats, up from just one in the last parliament. The poll of some 20,000 voters published by national broadcaster NOS predicted the center-left alliance would win eight of 31 European Parliament seats up for grabs in the Netherlands. Wilders was jubilant. "The biggest winner," he said on X, formerly Twitter. "And super tense because in Sunday's final result we can still become the biggest." Having sent shockwaves around Europe six months ago by becoming the biggest party in the Dutch national parliament, Wilders now wants to build on that popularity and set the tone for much of the bloc, with calls to claw power back to national capitals and away from the EU so that member states have more autonomy on issues such as migration. Final results for the entire EU will be announced in Brussels after polls close Sunday night. The Netherlands is electing 31 of the 720 members of the European Parliament to five-year terms. Paradoxically, like many hard-right parties across the bloc, Wilders wants to get more power in the European Parliament, so he can weaken the EU institutions from within. "You also need to have a strong presence in the European Parliament and make sure that, if necessary, we will be able to change the European guidelines in order to be in charge of our own immigration policy and asylum policy," Wilders said after voting in The Hague. That is why he was immediately calling for a broad alliance of hard right parties to break up the traditional coalition of Christian Democrats, Socialists, pro-business Liberals and Greens. "Making a larger group in the European Parliament," Wilders said, "that gives us power to change all those European regulations in order to be more in charge of it ourselves — here in the national parliaments." Wilders, Italy's Prime

Minister Giorgia Meloni and French opposition leader Marine Le Pen stand in stark contrast to much of the left and many center parties, which call for a more united European approach on anything from climate change measures to defense, arguing individual nations only have a weak voice on the global stage. "It is important that the European Union is a good and strong partner," said Gerard Kroon, a 66-year-old who works for the Hague municipality and voted in city hall for pro-Europe party Volt. "We have to get things done all together. Not only in Europe but in the Netherlands too." Since the last EU election in 2019, populist, far-right and extremist parties now lead governments in three EU nations, are part of governing coalitions in several others, and appear to have surging public support across the continent. The Dutch center-right Christian Democratic Appeal party reported that its website was "temporarily less accessible" because of a distributed denial of service attack Thursday. "On election day, we consider this an attack on free, democratic elections," the party posted on X. National broadcaster NOS reported that the site of Wilders' party and the far right Forum for Democracy also were briefly down. The EU elections are the world's second-biggest exercise in democracy behind the election in India, and the stakes are high. Almost 400 million voters will be electing 720 members of the European Parliament from beyond the Arctic circle to the edges of Africa and Asia. The results will have an impact on issues ranging from global climate policies and defense to migration and geopolitical relations with China and the United States. There was some early voting in some countries, but the Netherlands is the only EU country to start its single-day vote so early, followed by Ireland and the Czech Republic on Friday and the rest of the EU nations over the weekend. Europe-wide results will be announced Sunday night after all member states have completed voting. Since the last European elections in 2019, war has broken out on the fringe of the bloc following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, a country that desperately wants to join the EU.



Modi Set to Be Formally Elected as Alliance Leader

NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - Newly elected lawmakers of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's National Democratic Alliance (NDA) arrived in New Delhi for their first meeting at which he will be formally elected as their leader, ahead of presenting his claim to form a new coalition government. Although Modi will become prime minister for a record-equalling third consecutive term, this is the first time his Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has needed regional parties for support to form the government. The BJP, which enjoyed a handsome majority in the previous two terms, secured only 240 seats, way behind the 272 mark needed to form a government in its own right. The NDA won 293 seats in the 543-member lower house of parliament and the INDIA alliance led by Rahul Gandhi's centrist Congress party won over 230 seats, more than forecast. Indian media has reported that Modi's allies, mainly the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and Janata Dal (United), are eyeing the post of the speaker in the lower house while the BJP is expected to retain four key ministries - foreign affairs, defence, interior and finance.

Israeli Strike on UN School Kills Dozens in Gaza



CAIRO (Dispatches) - Israel hit a Gaza school on Thursday with what it described as a targeted airstrike on up to 30 Hamas and Islamic Jihad fighters inside, and a Hamas official said 40 people were killed including women and children sheltering at the U.N. site. Video footage showed Palestinians hauling away bodies and scores of injured in a hospital after the attack, which took place at a sensitive moment in mediated talks on a ceasefire that would involve releasing hostages held by Hamas and some of the Palestinians held in Israeli jails. At the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in Deir al-Balah, a Palestinian boy, Imad al-Maqadmeh, lay on the floor, his swollen face badly bruised and bleeding. He said he lost his father in the strike. "What did we do? There are no armed people in the school. The ones there are children, playing. We play together... Why did they bomb us?" he said in the video obtained by Reuters. In images of the dead laid out at the hospital surrounded by wailing mourners, bodies were mostly wrapped in shrouds or carpets, making it impossible to determine their identities from the video. The U.S. issued a joint statement with other countries calling on Israel and Hamas to compromise to finalise a deal after eight months of war in the Gaza Strip. Qatar's foreign ministry spokesperson Majed Al-Ansari said Hamas had not yet responded to the latest ceasefire proposal and was still studying it, adding that Qatar, Egypt and the U.S. mediation efforts are still ongoing. Hamas sources said there was nothing new to respond to, adding the Israeli proposal was old and the group rejected it because it did not speak of an end to the war or a complete pull out from Gaza. Ismail Al-Thawabta, the director of the Hamas-run government media office, rejected Israel's assertion that the U.N. school in Nuseirat, in central Gaza, had hidden a Hamas command post. "The occupation uses ... false fabricated stories to justify the brutal crime it

conducted against dozens of displaced people," Thawabta told Reuters. Israel's military said its fighter jets had carried out a "precise strike", and circulated satellite photos highlighting two parts of a building where it said the fighters were based. "We're very confident in the intelligence," military spokesperson Lt Col. Peter Lerner said, accusing Hamas and Islamic Jihad fighters of deliberately using U.N. facilities as operational bases. He said 20 to 30 fighters were located in the compound, and many of them had been killed. "I'm not aware of any civilian casualties and I'd be very, very cautious of accepting anything that Hamas puts out," he said. Later Israel's chief military spokesperson Daniel Hagari said the military had so far identified nine of 30 Hamas and Islamic Jihad fighters targeted in the pre-dawn strike. As people at the school cleared rubble from bloodstained classrooms, survivor Huda Abu Dhaheer described waking up to the sound of rockets. "People's remains were scattered inside the yard and outside. The gas canister exploded," she told Reuters. "My nephew was martyred (killed), he lost his leg and arm, he was a 10-year-old." Washington said it expected Israel to be fully transparent in making information about the strike public. "As a general matter, and as we've said before, Israel has a right to go after Hamas. But we've also been clear that Israel must take every precaution possible and do more to protect civilians," a White House National Security Council spokesperson said. Late on Thursday, Hamas media said an Israeli airstrike on the house of the mayor of Al-Nuseirat camp in central Gaza Strip killed the mayor, Eyad Al-Mghari, and some members of his family. In a separate Israeli airstrike on a house in Deir Al-Balah in central Gaza Strip, three Palestinians were killed and several others were wounded, medics said.

World Leaders, Veterans, Commemorate Normandy Landings

OMAHA BEACH (Dispatches) - U.S. President Joe Biden made an impassioned call for the defense of freedom and democracy at the 80th anniversary of the D-Day landings in Normandy on Thursday, urging Western powers to stay the course with Ukraine and not surrender to Russian tyranny. At a joint ceremony with French President Emmanuel Macron and U.S. veterans at the Normandy American Cemetery, Biden said it was "simply unthinkable" to surrender to Russian aggression and he promised no let-up in support for Ukraine. He urged Western and NATO allies to recapture the spirit of D-Day and work together at a time when he said democracy was under greater threat than at any time since the end of World War Two. "Isolationism was not the answer 80 years ago and is not the answer today," Biden said in his speech. On June 6, 1944, more than 150,000 Allied soldiers invaded France by sea and air to drive out the forces of Nazi Germany, coming ashore at five beaches codenamed Omaha, Juno, Sword, Utah and Gold or dropping from the sky. With the numbers of veterans fast dwindling - many are aged 100 or more - this is likely to be the last major ceremony in Normandy honouring them in their presence. Biden said it was the highest honour to salute the assembled U.S. veterans, some huddled in warm



blankets, turning to tell them: "God love ya." "The men who fought here became heroes," he said. "They knew beyond any doubt there are things that are worth fighting and dying for." Veterans, around 200 of whom were present, have been the stars of commemorations throughout the week. As veterans arrived at an international commemoration at Omaha Beach on Thursday, world leaders applauded each of them as they were pushed past them on wheelchairs, some of them smiling proudly and saluting. Some leaders, including Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy and Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte, knelt to be at the same level as the veterans in wheelchairs as they exchanged a few words. With war raging in Ukraine on Europe's borders, the anniversary of this turning point in World War Two carries special resonance. It also takes place in a year of many elections, including for the European Parliament this week and in the U.S. in November. Critics fear former President Donald Trump, who will go head-to-head with Biden in the election, would reduce U.S. support for Ukraine. Zelenskiy and his wife Olena Zelenska received an ovation when they arrived at the Omaha Beach ceremony as World War Two bombers flew overhead. Zelenskiy hugged Macron and talked with many of the heads of state present.

Porzingis' Return Sparks Celtics in Finals Opener



NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Kristaps Porzingis wasn't going to let a 37-day layoff slow him down during the biggest game of his NBA career. Playing in the NBA Finals for the first time, the Celtics big man returned from a 10-game absence to record 20 points off the bench and Boston snuffed a second-half rally to beat the Dallas Mavericks 107-89 on Thursday night in Game 1. Porzingis hadn't played since April 29 due to a right calf strain that he sustained during Game 4 of the Celtics' first-round series against the Miami Heat. He quickly found his groove again, though, making 8 of 13 field-goal attempts while collecting six rebounds and three blocks in 21 minutes. "Even if I have time off, I can jump right back in and I feel the same way," Porzingis said. "I get to my spots ... so whether it's playoffs, regular season or whatever, I know how to do this. That's it, just having that confidence, going out there whatever, first round or Finals, just going out there with full confidence and giving what I have to the team." Porzingis' early efforts helped the Celtics lead by as much as 29 points late in the first half, but Dallas got back into the game thanks to a third-quarter outburst headlined by Luka Doncic. The star guard accounted for 10 points during the Mavericks' 22-9 surge to open the frame, with his 3-point cutting Dallas' deficit to 72-64 with 4:28 to go. The Celtics responded emphatically, rattling off the next 14 points to take a 22-point lead. Daniel Gafford closed the third with a pair of free throws to get Dallas within 20, but the Mavericks trailed by at least 17 for the entirety of the

fourth. Even though the Mavericks weren't able to recover completely, Dallas coach Jason Kidd was still able to take some positives out of the comeback bid. "A lot of good things in that third and fourth that we can build on," said Kidd, whose team outscored Boston in both of those periods. "That's what we talked about after the game, and that's what we have to do." "We came out and won the third. Had a great opportunity to cut into that lead. Unfortunately, they go on a run. Once we cut it to eight, but then you know we won the fourth. So there are two positive things that we can take from these four quarters." Game 2 is set for Sunday in Boston. Jaylen Brown led the Celtics with 22 points and added six boards, three steals and three blocks. Jayson Tatum chipped in 16 points and 11 rebounds, while Derrick White netted 15 points. Thursday's victory gave Tatum flashbacks of the 2022 Finals, in which Boston downed the Golden State Warriors in Game 1 before going on to drop the series in six games. Because of that, Tatum is focused on making sure the Celtics don't ease up on Sunday. "It definitely does feel good to win the first game," Tatum said, "but we know that two years ago we won the first game and the outcome of that series. So we still have a lot of work to do." Doncic recorded 30 points and 10 rebounds for Dallas, which was outshot 47.6 percent to 41.7 percent overall. P.J. Washington went for 14 points, Jaden Hardy scored 13 and Kyrie Irving, showered with boos all night, had 12.

Grealish, Maguire, Maddison Cut From England Squad for Euro 2024

LONDON (Dispatches) - Jack Grealish was a shock omission from England's Euro 2024 squad as Gareth Southgate axed the Manchester City winger on Thursday after his disappointing end to the season. Grealish paid the price for a significant dip in form in the second half of the Premier League campaign as he became the most high-profile star to be dropped from Southgate's provisional 33-man squad. The 28-year-old wasn't the only big name to suffer Euro heartache as Manchester United defender Harry Maguire and Tottenham playmaker James Maddison also missed out. Grealish was an unused substitute during City's FA Cup final defeat against Manchester United in May after being left out of the Premier League champions' title-winning game against West Ham. He did feature for England as a substitute in their win in a friendly against Bosnia and Herzegovina on Monday, but it wasn't enough to convince Southgate to take him to Germany. Maguire was unable to prove his fitness after struggling with a calf injury, while Maddison endured a poor end to the domestic season. Everton defender Jarrad Branthwaite, Liverpool midfielder Curtis Jones, Burnley goalkeeper James Trafford and Liverpool



defender Jarell Quansah were the other omissions from Southgate's final 26-man squad. The Football Association revealed the squad ahead of schedule as players who missed out made their omissions public. "All the players took the news really respectfully. Of course, all players will think they should be in and that's why they are top players," Southgate told reporters. "They have that self-belief and mindset, but the fact is we have some players who have been playing extremely well in the league all season." "We just felt other players had stronger seasons particularly in the last six months or so." Maguire has been a mainstay of Southgate's defence throughout his reign as coach. But the 31-year-old centre-back's failure to recover for United's FA Cup final win against Manchester City in May — after spending several weeks on the sidelines — left him with little chance of winning his fitness battle. "Harry has made some progress but it's been complicated, we definitely wouldn't have had him for the group stages," Southgate said. Crystal Palace's Marc Guehi, Brighton's Lewis Dunk, Liverpool's Joe Gomez and Aston Villa's Ezri Konsa will compete to play along Manchester City's John Stones at the heart of England's defence.

U.S. Beat Pakistan in T20 World Cup Super Over Thriller



DALLAS (Dispatches) - The United States enjoyed arguably the greatest day in their cricket history as the non-Test nation beat Pakistan in a stunning Super Over upset at the T20 World Cup on Thursday. Both teams made 159 in their standard 20 overs of this Group A match at Grand Prairie, near Dallas, Texas. Then the United States, batting first in a Super Over bowled for Pakistan by veteran left-arm quick Mohammad Amir, made an 18 that featured several wides and runs off panic-stricken overthrows. India-born pacesman Saurabh Netravalkar held his nerve as Pakistan, runners-up at the 2022 T20 World Cup and champions in 2009, only managed 13-1 in reply. Pakistan were 5-0 off three balls before Netravalkar had Iftikhar Ahmed brilliantly caught low down in the deep by Kumar. And with seven needed off the last ball, Shadab Khan was unable to manage the six that would have forced a second Super Over, sparking wild celebrations among the USA team and their home fans. "It's a huge achievement," said United States captain Monank Patel, whose 50 was the cornerstone of his side's 159-3 in their regulation 20 overs. "For us to beat Pakistan, we are playing them for the first time, I am just so proud of how we played. It was a proper team effort from first ball until the last." Pakistan were earlier restricted to 159-7, left-arm quick Netravalkar taking a miserly 2-18, in their first match of the tournament. The United States, having been cruising to victory, were on the verge of defeat when they needed 12 off their last three balls of their innings. But Aaron Jones — the hero of their run chase in an opening group win over Canada — hit Haris Rauf for six before Nitish Kumar struck a last-ball full toss for four as the tournament co-hosts levelled the scores.

Hamilton Says Cars Still Too Heavy Despite Plan to Slim Down



MONTREAL (Dispatches) - Lewis Hamilton on Thursday welcomed Formula One's plan for lighter more agile cars, but believes the sport's ruling body has not gone far enough in reducing their weight. The seven-time champion said it was a "step in the right direction" as he responded to questions about the planned new regulations to be used from 2026 at a news conference on the eve of this weekend's Canadian Grand Prix. "It's only 30 kilos (66 lbs) so it's going in the right direction but it's still heavy," Hamilton said. "So, I mean I've only just seen what you've all seen this morning. I don't really have huge thoughts on it just yet, but I have spoken to some drivers who have driven it on a sim (simulator), as I haven't driven it on the sim, and they said it's pretty slow." "So, we will see whether it's actually the right direction or not." The Mercedes driver, who has won in Canada a record seven times, shared with Ferrari great Michael Schumacher, added some praise for the sport's impending move towards sustainable fuels. "I think in terms of sustainability on the PU (power unit) side, it's a bold step and in the right direction," he said. "We've just got to make sure the cars are efficient, fast and a natural step forward — and actually the racing is improved." Under the proposed new rules, the minimum weight of the cars will be reduced from 798 kilos to 768. Hamilton was one of many drivers in recent years to complain that the cars had become too big and too cumbersome. Haas driver Nico Hulkenberg agreed with Hamilton and suggested more can be done. "Yeah, it's certainly quite different and has some interesting areas and aspects, some that still need a bit further work," he said. "And like Lewis said the weight reduction is good but 30kg is not the world. And it looks like a lot less downforce, especially in high-speed corners, so it will be a different scenario and characteristic to now."

Swiatek Triumphs over Gauff at French Open

PARIS (Dispatches) - Iga Swiatek is as good as it gets in tennis at the moment, especially at the French Open. Been that way for quite some time. So her unyielding success against Coco Gauff just about everywhere — and certainly at Roland Garros — should come as no surprise by now. Swiatek continued her mastery over Gauff and extended her winning streak in Paris to 20 matches with a 6-2, 6-4 victory in the semifinals on Thursday. "For sure, it was intense," said the No. 1-ranked Swiatek, who claimed five of the last six games after trailing 3-1 in the second set. "I'm happy that I just was consistent with my tactics and didn't overthink stuff and just went for it at the end." In Saturday's title match, Swiatek will face No. 12 Jasmine Paolini of Italy, a 6-3, 6-1 winner against unseeded 17-year-old Mirra Andreeva of Russia in the second semifinal. Swiatek, who turned 23 last week, is trying to earn her fourth championship in five years at the French Open and can become the first woman with three in a row since Justine Henin from 2005-07. For Paolini, this will be her first Grand Slam final; she never even had made it past the second round in any of her initial 16 appearances at majors until getting to the fourth round at the Australian Open in January. Swiatek improved to 11-1 overall against No. 3 seed Gauff, the reigning US Open champion. That is more victories than Swiatek has accumulated against any



other player — and includes head-to-head wins at the clay-court Grand Slam tournament three years in a row, including in the 2022 final and last year's quarterfinals. "She's a tough matchup for me, obviously," Gauff said. Swiatek, who is 4-0 in major finals, has been at her dominant best for most of the past month, following up on titles at clay events in Rome and Madrid. Putting aside a three-set, second-round victory over four-time major champion Naomi Osaka, when she was forced to save a match point, Swiatek has ceded a total of merely 17 games in her other five matches in Paris. Displaying her usual brand of powerful-but-clean groundstrokes, Swiatek needed only 10 winners to advance on Thursday, because she made only 14 unforced errors — while Gauff finished with 39. "For the most part, I do think I had the right idea," Gauff said, "but I think I just made too many errors." This is what Swiatek does to whoever is across the net, particularly on clay: With defense and precision, she makes them hit so many shots that eventually the mistakes are bound to come. There was a similar dynamic in the other semifinal. The key statistics were these: Paolini saved all six break points she faced, and she made just 10 unforced errors to Andreeva's 29. Now Paolini goes from taking on a teen appearing in her fifth major tournament to someone seeking her fifth major title.